

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**REGULAR MEETING****Monday, April 9, 2001**

Present: June Bailey, James Johnston, M.S. Mitchell, Trix Niernberger, and *Leon Robinson

Absent: Joe Todd and William Sanders

Also Present: Tom Montgomery and Lori Shellhammer – Gossen Livingston; Chris Brunner and Bart Ewonus – Rock and Steele; Marvin Krout, Director, and Tonia Fairbanks, Environmental Planner, Wichita-Sedgwick Country Metropolitan Area Planning Department; David Neville - Wesley Medical Center; Doug Maryott – Wichita Inns; Al Caro – General Contractor; Terry Cassady and Matt Jordan – City Manager’s Office; Lucy Burtnett; Larry Farmer; and Doug Kupper, Larry Hoetmer, and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Mitchell called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the Regular Meetings of February 5, 2001, March 12, 2001, and Special Meeting of March 23, 2001, were reviewed. It was voted to approve the minutes, correcting the March 12, 2001 minutes to reflect that Trix Niernberger was in attendance.

1. **Discussion Grove Park Plan** Director Kupper introduced Tom Montgomery from Gossen Livingston. Montgomery referred board members to a rendering of the Grove Park Master Plan. He said the road through the park was designed as a public road and; therefore, parking along it had been removed. He briefly reviewed priority construction items including: irrigation at the existing football field, construction of an additional football field, restroom building (with possible concession area) grading for the golf driving range, building the tee, putting green, parking area, picnic area and play area. He said the revised plan also included a traffic circle to help slow down traffic. He said estimated parking requirements for the two football fields were 183 spaces. He said the parking lot at the golf practice area, play area and picnic area was reduced to 30 spaces.

*Leon Robinson present.

Montgomery stated that the bicycle trail plans were completed and that the trail entry/crossing was moved further south on Hillside. He reviewed existing park facilities indicating that they were considering modular buildings or “kit” designs for the new facilities. He referred board members to pictures of several design options for picnic shelters and storage buildings that would blend in with current facilities. He also briefly reviewed play equipment alternatives.

Montgomery introduced Chris Brunner and Bart Ewonus from Rock and Steele who addressed the park entrance feature. Chris Brunner referred board members to two different entrance designs. He said staff was leaning towards the more horizontal feature which included a "tree logo" that they thought could be used at other park locations and buildings. He said the main park entrance would be located off Hillside. He briefly reviewed both designs. The first design consisted of limestone with sandblasted lettering, a stylized tree made of heavy bronze, which would be permanently attached to the limestone, and a tower and slab of concrete with troweled on durable micro finish. The second design was cast concrete towers with the signage structure consisting of painted steel. He indicated that the concrete could be various colors and textures. He also reviewed secondary signage, which consisted of a smaller version of the selected design.

Marvin Krout, Director, Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department, introduced Tonia Fairbanks, Environmental Planner. He said Fairbanks had been reviewing Grove Park in terms of any environmental assessment needed on the property. He indicated that staff had recently discovered significant archaeological artifacts on the property and that the City Archaeologist would need to get involved in project development. Director Kupper asked about the age of the artifacts and the area of their location. Fairbanks said they were Native American artifacts that dated from 1500-1600. She said an overlay had been developed and that she would keep the board advised as meetings with the City Archeologist progressed. Staff said they thought the artifacts were located on the south west side of the park by the play area.

Niernerger expressed concern that as long as the Board has been discussing development of Grove Park that this issue was just now coming up. Director Kupper said he did not believe it would delay development of the Park to any great degree, depending on the location of the artifacts.

Johnston said he preferred the first entrance feature. Bailey asked about the status of "Hoop City". She also asked about the current playground area and the plan to move it closer to the neighborhood. In addition, she wondered whether 30 parking spaces would be adequate to serve the area adjacent to the bike path. Director Kupper said design focus would be on the rest of the park until staff ascertains the status of the "Hoop City" proposal. Bailey asked when the plan was going to be presented to the neighborhood. In conclusion, she also expressed concern about the length of time the project has been under discussion and that the artifact issue was just now surfacing.

Fairbanks clarified that she became aware of the overlays because federal dollars were being used to fund the project. She said any project that receives federal funding must come under environmental review and that one of the requirements of the review was to check for historical artifacts. Director Kupper indicated that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds would be used on the project.

Mitchell mentioned that another significant feature in the area was the shale outcropping along the south bank of Chisholm Creek. He suggested that perhaps that could be worked into the art element for the park. He asked if Tom Montgomery if Gossen Livingston had considered involving the National Guard in any part of the clearing, grading or excavation work at the park. Montgomery said the National Guard had contacted them. Hoetmer said the Guard had agreed to work one weekend per month clearing the golf area and possibly

providing some preliminary grading on the football fields. There was brief discussion concerning timing, and Montgomery said Gossen Livingston should be finished with the construction documents by mid-July.

2. **Proposed Wesley Expansion** Director Kupper introduced David Neville, Chief Operating Officer, Wesley Medical Center. As brief background, Kupper stated that Mr. Neville had given a presentation on the proposed Wesley expansion to the Development Coordinating Committee, which was an in-house committee consisting of department director's and other senior City staff. He said Sleepy Hollow Park would be directly impacted by the proposed expansion because Wesley was requesting a ten-foot easement along Edgemont to provide additional parking for a new hotel.

Mr. Neville explained that one of the requirements of the first phase of the expansion program was to demolish Wesley Motor Inn at the corner of Central and Rutan. He referred board members to an architectural rendering of the proposed Master Plan for the expansion project and explained that approximately 250,000 square feet would be added to the campus during the expansion, which would take place in phases over the next decade. He said Wesley would like to move the front of the medical center from Hillside to Central and Rutan. He said in order to make room for more surface lot parking for the main drop off area, the current Wesley Motor Inn needed to be demolished. But because Wesley treats Kansans from all over the state, they felt it was incumbent upon them to continue to provide some type of temporary lodging for family members of patients being treated at Wesley.

Neville explained that Wesley had identified a local developer to construct the new hotel and introduced Doug Maryott from Wichita Inns and Al Caro – General Contractor. He said Wesley owned property on Rutan that they felt would be suitable for construction of the new hotel. He said they were currently exploring zoning requirements, variances and possible easement/vacation requests. He concluded by saying that once funding was in place, he would be able to give the Board, as well as the neighborhood associations and District Advisory Board, a better time line and more project details, including impact on the neighborhood and what the neighbors could expect.

Doug Maryott explained that he was involved with five other hotels in the Wichita, all of which consisted of approximately 100 rooms, and that they had explored several alternative locations for a replacement hotel before deciding on the current proposed location at Edgemont and Rutan. He said the hotel would be reduced to 89 rooms because parking was at a premium. He said they were proposing using a 15-foot City owned easement to create 18 angle parking spaces going south on Edgemont and that they might be able to provide as many as 30 angle spaces along the north side of Edgemont. In addition, he said the Park Board owned approximately 5 feet of the easement. He mentioned the possibility of metering 10 of the parking spaces for park patrons. Neville explained that in the future Edgemont might become the main entrance to the hospital and that Wesley liked the idea of opening up Edgemont and making it a wider street or boulevard. He also mentioned the possibility of Wesley providing additional landscaping and other park improvements.

Board members asked several questions concerning location of the parking garages and emergency entrance, traffic flow, and number of stories in the hotel. Mitchell clarified that the effect to Sleepy Hollow Park would be the loss of 5 feet from the south edge of the park, along the north side of the right-of-way along Edgemont. Mitchell asked if Wesley wanted

Edgemont to remain a public street or private entrance? Neville stated that they were open to direction as far as vacation of the street with regard to setbacks and variance requests that they may have to request in the future. Neville concluded by asking the Board to provide any comments or suggestions concerning the plan.

Mitchell asked if anyone from the public wished to comment on the proposal. The following individuals spoke.

- Marvin Krout, 3421 Edgemont – explaining to the Board that he was not appearing before them in his official capacity as Director of the Wichita-Sedgwick Country Metropolitan Area Planning Department, but as a private citizen and homeowner, read a statement (a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A) that outlined his concerns regarding the proposed expansion project. He requested that the Board not take any action regarding Sleepy Hollow Park until the entire expansion proposal had been fully developed and discussed with both affected property owners and the District Advisory Board.
- Larry Farrar, 3411 Edgemont – expressed concern regarding increased traffic, light and sound pollution. He requested that the proposal be presented to a community meeting to obtain citizen input.

On motion by Johnston, second by Niernberger, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to defer any action on the proposed expansion at this time.

There was brief discussion and suggestions from the Board on how to involve the neighborhood and surrounding community.

3. **Discussion of Park Tour.** Director Kupper referred board members to M.S. Mitchell's 4/5/01 e-mail which suggested the following tour route and locations: Naftzger, Sleepy Hollow, Fairmount, Grove, NE Soccer/Baseball, Cessna, Henry/Linwood, Schweiter, O.J. Watson, Heritage and the Arkansas River bank project area. Bailey requested that the Greffenstein site be added. It was agreed to meet in the Atrium at City Hall at 8:30 a.m. on the 14th.
4. **Director's Update.**
 - **Herman Hill Park** – Director Kupper reported that board member Trix Niernberger had been invited to a joint meeting with the project consultants and the Board of Education related to utilizing the stripper plant as an educational tool. Niernberger said the group viewed a schematic of the proposed plant developed by Gossen Livingston. She said the project status and total cost was unclear to her; however, she understood that money is available to install the collection wells downtown. She said the plan called for an education center, aqueduct and stream with educational programming provided by the school system. She said she specifically requested that a project presentation be given to the Park Board at a future date.

- There was also brief discussion concerning the following items:

*Director Kupper reported that the City Council had approved the Library's proposal to utilize the old City Arts Building.

*Director Kupper thanked board members for their attendance at the dedication of Lincoln Park and the groundbreaking ceremony for the adult soccer fields on Ohio.

*Staff reminded Board members that their appointments expired on June 30, 2001.

*Fairmount Park Shelter. June Bailey requested a status report on the project detailing what the Board had approved in the way of improvements/rehabilitation and a timeline. Director Kupper said staff would request that information from Public Works, since the building was under their jurisdiction.

*Condition of Kiwanis Park Enclosed Shelter. June Bailey also mentioned that the Kiwanis Park shelter was in such poor condition (cob webs, filthy, etc.) that the Orchard Breeze Neighborhood Association was forced to clean it before they could have their meeting. Bailey commented that as a Park Board member, the condition of the building was embarrassing. There was considerable discussion concerning building maintenance responsibilities.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- Article from the *Wichita Eagle* dated 4/5/01 entitled "New library in store for north side"

Trix Niernberger requested that a future Board meeting be held at the Great Plains Nature Center.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.

M.S. Mitchell, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk
Recording Secretary

EXHIBIT A

April 9, 2001

Dear Park Board members:

My name is Marvin Krout and I live at 3421 Edgemont in Wichita. Edgemont is the first street north of Central and our home is ½ block east of Vassar and the Wesley Medical Center. As some of you may know, I am the Director of the Metropolitan Area Planning Department. I am not before you today in any official capacity regarding that department; in fact, I have asked my staff not to involve me in reviewing applications regarding Wesley's proposed expansion plans to avoid any perception of bias. I am also not here officially representing my neighbors in Sleepy Hollow, although I have talked to several neighbors over the weekend and they expressed concerns to me similar to the ones I will be raising.

I am here to ask you not to take any action regarding the park area north of Edgemont between Vassar and Rutan, but instead to request that Wesley and their associates use their best efforts to inform and involve affected property owners, not just concerning the alterations to the park, but concerning all their plans for the area, and then go to the District Advisory Board for review and recommendations, prior to asking the Park Board or other boards to take any action.

I was contacted by Wesley several months ago, shortly after an article that appeared in the Wichita Business Journal about their expansion plans. My department has had a very good working relationship with Wesley in recent years, including assisting their management team in assessing how the community will change in the future and how Wesley's mission and services may be modified to meet new challenges. As a planner, I was very pleased to hear that their plan was to reinvest in and redevelop their main campus. This will ensure a solid tax base, more employment, and other positive benefits for businesses and residents in the area.

More recently, I have had several discussions with Wesley and Wichita Inn officials as their plans have begun to gel. I disclosed that I lived close-by at the beginning of these discussions. But I still thought that I could play a helpful role in reviewing their plans early on and advising them about city policies and processes. I also had hoped that my influence would lead to Wesley agreeing to involve the neighborhood in the vicinity before filing any applications or appearing before any boards, which is the same kind of advice we give to all prospective applicants who come to the MAPD. We have found that the result of not working with your neighbors from the beginning is to create a hostile, suspicious response from them, prolong the process, and get a black eye image-wise. I have not talked to anyone outside City Hall about their plans until late last week, when I discovered that they had been placed on the Park Board agenda.

But as obvious as this suggestion to work with neighbors seems, we find that most applicants do not heed it. Despite our efforts, there is still an attitude that lies both inside and outside City Hall, that if you are big enough and/or you know the right people, you don't have to worry about the neighbors. I am sure that Wesley and Wichita Inn officials will tell you that this was some miscommunication, and it may well have been. However, this kind of miscommunication just does not occur in an institutional culture that truly respects and encourages meaningful and early citizen involvement in development decisions. And the cities that have developed that culture

generally are rewarded with better results in terms of development quality and more satisfied citizens.

Aside from lack of public involvement, I would suggest that you not take action because their plan is still not fully developed. There are significant issues of whether and how streets will be closed or modified; what impact that will have on traffic; how will parking requirements be satisfied; should the current regulations that require a hotel in an office zoning district to have direct frontage and access to a major street be waived; and what will the project look like. I am here to testify to you that this small park is very well utilized. I have concerns that even a small reduction in the area of this small park – compounded by added traffic on Edgemont, the possibility of closing Edgemont to public access, and the construction of a 4-story hotel across the street from the park -- will reduce its use and enjoyment.

The research we did for the Park and Parkways Plan that was adopted by this board 5 years ago indicated that city residents most wanted close by neighborhood parks like this, and that the older neighborhood parks in the city particularly suffered from a deficit of these kinds of parks. The parking that is being suggested is much more than is needed to serve users of this park. Apparently Wesley intends to vacate the block of Edgemont adjoining the park as a public street, and then use the proposed parking on either side to help meet their parking requirements for the proposed hotel. Even with this, the parking appears to be well short of what is needed to meet normal parking requirements, and it may be that there is just not enough room to insert a hotel at this particular site.

My neighbors and I have no knowledge of what the proposed hotel will look like, although we hope it will look more like other buildings on the Wesley campus rather than like the other Wichita Inns in the city. We have no idea of or how Wesley plans to improve the area, but we would hope to see landscaping, sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting that complements the park.

My neighborhood is one of many older neighborhoods in the city that are teetering on the edge between revitalization and decline. One of the reasons that homeowners choose not to invest in these neighborhoods is because they don't have the confidence that the City will help protect their investment, based on our history of development decision-making. I am asking you, along with Wesley, to reverse that history, beginning with this proposed project.

Sincerely,

Marvin S. Krout